



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

**REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN HARDING, JR.**  
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**MEMBER**  
ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE  
FINANCE, REVENUE, AND BONDING COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Commerce Committee  
March 1, 2016

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5424 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEARN HERE, LIVE HERE PROGRAM**

Co-Chairs Senator Hartley, Representative Perone; Vice Chairs Senator Crisco, Representative Vargas; Ranking Members Senator Frantz, Representative Camillo; and esteemed members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of House Bill 5424, An Act Concerning The Implementation of The Learn Here, Live Here Program. This bill seeks to require the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to establish the Learn Here, Live Here program, which helps students save toward a down payment on their first home in Connecticut by segregating a portion of their state income tax payments for up to ten years after they graduate.

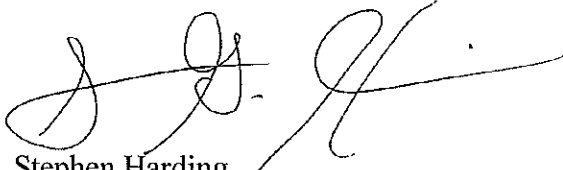
Under current law, the "Learn Here, Live Here" program *may* be established by the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, but in order for this law to do what we have intended it to do we must require the Commissioner to establish "Learn Here, Live Here".

Connecticut has many great Colleges and Universities which produce amazingly talented and bright individuals. The problem with this, however, is that we are unable to keep these graduates in Connecticut. They are taking their talents to other states where there are not only more job opportunities, but also a cheaper cost of living.

While I recognize there are costs associated with the establishment of this program, I view the establishment of "Learn Here, Live Here" as not only a solid investment in our young people, but also a sign to businesses that they need not look any farther than our borders for talent to fill their workforce.

With all the money we invest in our Colleges and Universities, it is time for us to make an investment in what these institutions produce. We cannot afford to be a feeder for other states and we must stop the brain drain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Harding', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Harding  
State Representative – 107<sup>th</sup> District  
Bethel • Brookfield • Danbury